



## **Rebuild Iowa Task Force Agriculture and Environment Task Force Meeting Notes**

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**Wednesday, July 30, 2008 — 8:30 a.m.  
Iowa Farm Bureau Federation  
5400 University Avenue  
West Des Moines, IA 50266**

**Task Force Members Present:**

Senator Jerry Behn, Iowa General Assembly, Boone  
Dean Black, Livestock Producer, Iowa Cattlemen Association, Somers  
Brent Halling, Chair, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Perry  
Warren Kemper, Iowa Corn Growers Association, Wapello  
Carlton Kjos, Iowa Farm Bureau Federation, Decorah  
Ted Kourousis, Northwest Iowa Planning and Development Commission, Spencer  
Representative Mark Kuhn, Iowa General Assembly, Charles City  
Regina Lloyd, Iowa Farmers Union, Linden  
Bill Northey, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture, Des Moines  
Denise O'Brien, Iowa Environmental Council, Atlantic  
David Patterson, Iowa Association of County Engineers, Kalona  
Anne Robinson (for Mark Ackelson), Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Des Moines  
Mark Rosenbury, Agribusiness Association of Iowa, Des Moines  
Deb Ryun, Conservation Districts of Iowa, Chariton  
Drue Sander, Iowa Institute for Cooperatives, Ames  
Representative Tom Sands, Iowa General Assembly, Columbus Junction  
Ed Ulch, Farmer, Iowa Soybean Association, Solon  
Heidi Vittetoe, Livestock Producer, Washington  
Wendy Wintersteen, Iowa State University, Ames  
Senator Frank Wood, Iowa General Assembly, Eldridge

**Resource Group Members Present:**

Donna Buell, Buell Law Office, Spirit Lake  
Paul Govoni, Hydro-Klean, Des Moines  
Tim Helmbrecht, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Des Moines  
Tolif Hunt, Whiterock Conservancy, Coon Rapids  
Chad Ingels, Farmer, Farm Bureau, Randalia  
JoAnn Johnson, Panora  
Chris Jones, Des Moines Water Works, Ankeny  
Dave McMurray, Upper Mississippi Illinois and Missouri Rivers Association (UMIMRA), Burlington  
Gene Parkin, The University of Iowa, Iowa City  
Jerry Peckumn, Farmer, Jefferson  
Chris Petersen, Family Farmer and Consultant, Clear Lake  
Mike Sexton, Twin Lakes Environmental Services, Rockwell City  
Francis Thicke, Farmer, Fairfield

**Presenters:**

Marty Adkins, USDA  
Bruce Barnhart, Iowa Land Improvement Contractors Association, West Branch  
Paul Fredrickson, USDA, Farm Service Agency  
Vickie Friedow, USDA, Farm Service Agency  
Jim Gillespie, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS)  
Chuck Gipp, IDALS, Decorah  
Chad Hart, Iowa State University, Ames  
Robin Holcomb, USDA, Farm Service Agency  
Derryl McLaren, USDA, Farm Service Agency  
Kevin McClure, USDA, Farm Service Agency  
Gerald Miller, Iowa State University, Ames  
Dan Otto, Iowa State University, Ames  
Dan Rasmussen, Iowa Land Improvement Contractors Association, Independence  
Craig Rice, USDA, Risk Management Agency, St. Paul, Minnesota  
Margaret Van Ginkel, Iowa State University Extension and Iowa Concern Hotline

**Observers and Guests**

Tom Block, Iowa Farm Bureau Federation, West Des Moines  
Devin Boerm, House Democratic Caucus Staff, Des Moines  
Rod Boshart, The Gazette, Cedar Rapids  
William Bryant, Rebuild Iowa Office (RIO)  
Tess Capps, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship  
Jason Clayworth, Des Moines Register, Des Moines  
Shawn Cogdill, Farmers Cooperative, Farnhamville  
Liesl Eathington, Iowa State University, Ames  
Susan Fenton, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Des Moines  
Jim Friedrich, Legislative Services Agency, Des Moines  
Cecil Harry, Heartland Coop, West Des Moines  
Deborah Helsen, Legislative Services Agency, Des Moines  
Andrew Hug, Environment Iowa, Des Moines  
Deb Kozel, Legislative Services Agency, Des Moines  
Jace Mikels, Senate Democratic Caucus Staff, Des Moines  
Lew Olson, House Republican Caucus Staff, Des Moines  
Raymond Palmer, FEMA  
Jim Reilly, FEMA, Urbandale  
Laura Riordan, Rebuild Iowa Office (RIO), Des Moines  
Dave Swenson, Iowa State University, Ames  
Georgia Van Gundy, Iowa Farm Bureau Federation, West Des Moines  
Ann Ver Heul, Legislative Services Agency, Des Moines

**Staff**

Lyle Asell, Iowa Department of Natural Resources and Rebuild Iowa Office (RIO)  
Harold Hommes, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and RIO  
Amelia Colwell, State Public Policy Group (SPPG) and RIO  
Paritosh Kasotia, SPPG and RIO  
Tom Slater, SPPG and RIO

**Welcome and Introductions**

Chairman Halling welcomed the group and thanked them for their attendance. He explained the charge of the Rebuild Iowa Office (RIO) and Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission (RIAC). He

said the purpose of the day would be to gather information from presentations, and there will be another meeting scheduled for August 13, 2008 from 1:30 – 4:30 pm at the Johnston Public Library to put together final recommendations. He asked the group for self-introductions.

Slater introduced the format of the nine task forces, with each making recommendations to the RIAC and role of the Task Force and the Resource Group. The morning will involve presentations and the afternoon will identify gaps and issues, with the final recommendations to come from the August 13 meeting. He explained that the 45-day report will go to the Rebuild Iowa Commission who will make recommendations to the Governor. Slater said the process will be as transparent and open as possible and attendees will receive further communication from the Rebuild Iowa Office (RIO).

### **Presentation of Information**

Please go to the RIO web site [www.rio.iowa.gov](http://www.rio.iowa.gov) to see copies of the presentations.

#### *An Economic and Social Overview of the Events*

Halling introduced Chad Hart from Iowa State University. Hart said estimates from 2008 are that the state will harvest 93% of the corn planted and mentioned that yield estimates are unclear. He said 400,000 soybean acres have been taken out by flooding, and soybeans will be more affected than corn. The state may see land erosion as the weather improves. For livestock, the biggest area of impact has been on winter feed supplies. Additionally, hay cutting has been delayed. CRP land has been opened for grazing, which will help. The federal government programs include crop insurance, Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE), Conservation Reserve Program, Emergency Farm Loans, and Emergency Conservation Program. Short-term recommendations include utilizing the Disaster Debt Set-Aside Program and promoting SURE sign-up. Long-term recommendations include timing of the SURE program; the funds will not be available until October 2009, so the Task Force may choose to recommend to USDA and Congress to expedite payments. A Task Force member asked for a copy of the presentation, and Slater said the presentations will be made available. A Task Force member asked why the payments are delayed, and Hart said payments rely on the full year market rates. A Task Force member asked if the amount paid depends on the amount of insurance bought, and Hart said yes. Halling thanked Hart and introduced Dan Otto.

Otto spoke on the agriculture-related community impacts of the disasters, such as reduced spending and main street purchases, economic offsets if rebuilding occurs, transportation infrastructure used by agri-industries, and facilities and equipment of agriculture retailers also damaged in flood and wind storms. Flooding has disrupted agricultural businesses, which will need disaster mitigation planning before future disasters. Short-term recommendations include addressing the needs of agricultural retailers facing flood losses and devoting resources to develop natural disaster response plans for non-metro communities. Long-term recommendations include creating a statewide ombudsman office for disaster recovery and creating a private-public lending agency to coordinate financial assistance. A Task Force member asked if the intention would be to have the state create a loan program. Otto said the intention would be to create a revolving loan and/or grant fund from donation drives. A Task Force member asked whether he had considered talking to other states based on their disaster experiences. Otto said that Cedar Rapids is taking advantage of the Grand Forks/Fargo flood experience, and the planning segment of Iowa State University is also borrowing from their experience. Halling asked when an estimate would be available, and Otto said he would follow up on that.

Margaret Van Ginkel introduced herself and said she is from Iowa State University Extension and the Iowa Concern hotline. The hotline's three main areas of focus are information referral,

legal education, and stress counseling. She said that when a disaster hits, Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management uses the Iowa Concern hotline to direct people to resources and coordinate volunteers. Iowa Concern helped with the Parkersburg disaster and flooding and has taken 5,000 calls concerning these disasters. Van Ginkel said she has seen the stages of grief throughout the disaster, and people are experiencing anger. She said that there has been an increase in agricultural calls and need to talk through situations with people. They have encouraged people to communicate with service providers and bankers about their concerns. For farm-related disasters, people only talk about their farms and not other issues, such as house damage. People are not sure what kind of crops they will grow and whether they will replant. Van Ginkel has seen some “us versus them” attitude with regard to rural and urban populations; there is sentiment from rural areas that there is not enough attention being paid to rural areas. She said that the FEMA representative was impressed with Iowa’s effort to recover. A Task Force member asked if sentiments were proactive or reactive; Van Ginkel said calls were reactive and sometimes expressed embarrassment in asking for help.

A Task Force member asked about the livestock loss estimate to the state, and Van Ginkel said she was unsure of the total. A Task Force member asked if livestock producers normally bought insurance on the loss of life, and a Resource Group member said it was available federally. Van Ginkel said that there was preparation for animals based on previous experience. She mentioned that the Iowa Department of Human Services has gotten a grant to do counseling, and Iowa Concern has been helping with that. Halling thanked Van Ginkel and encouraged the group to break individually as needed. A Task Force member added that she would like to see economic loss numbers on fruit and vegetable growers.

#### *Impacts to Soils and Conservation Practices*

Gipp, Adkins, and Gillespie spoke on impacts to soils and conservation practices. Factors that lead to flooding include a very wet 2007, a long, cold 2007-2008 winter, a cold, wet spring, and a record wet 15 days. Gipp mentioned the Iowa Daily Erosion Project conducted by Iowa State University and showed a map of cumulative erosion in Iowa. He said that in spite of terraces, some failed. Gipp said that the need for waterway maintenance has been emphasized through flooding. There is a 2008 Flood Damage Assessment Survey that requested information from conservation districts and the results estimate that 2.2 million acres experienced erosion, with 55% of grass waterways and 83% of terraces working properly. \$40 million is estimated to be the damage aggregation with regard to soil conservation. Adkins said that the flooding came at a time when soil was the most vulnerable. For the future, Gipp recommended considering the hydrologic footprint of all actions, proposing new initiatives for water storage and infiltration, accelerating adoption of no-till/ residue management for erosion, soil quality, and infiltration, expanding the conservation systems approach, increasing the focus on practice maintenance, renewing focus on planning for watersheds, and building a culture of conservation. Adkins added that watershed and conservation planning have been underutilized and is also an issue for housing, transportation, and economic development.

Gillespie said that there has been a lot of progress with regard to conservation, and storms have brought about an opportunity to participate in additional conservation measures. Gillespie said that in Crawford County, two watersheds prevented Denison from flooding. A Task Force member mentioned the use of cover crops to prevent erosion. A Task Force member asked about building standards during the rebuilding phase, and Gipp said funding will go toward repair instead of putting new practices in place and ideally, resources would be in place to do both. Gillespie emphasized the importance of technical assistance to rebuilders to help them make the best decisions. Adkins said that because of lands being turned over to wetlands, the flood was managed and economic disaster was prevented in that area and areas downstream. A Task Force member asked about the federal program dollars that will be coming into the state

and challenges that will accompany that funding. Adkins said that three USDA programs will be explored. A Task Force member asked about the \$40 million cost and where the money will come from. Adkins said the national office has been notified of \$75-80 million cost. A Task Force member mentioned the importance of technical assistance, and Adkins said they will rely heavily on contributions from private sector and local entities to help with that. Gillespie said that local USDA and FSA offices can provide technical assistance and resources.

A Resource Group member asked about the value of perennials in rotation, and Adkins said those systems take stress off of structural systems. A Task Force member asked about the capacity for physical contractors to complete the work. Gillespie said there is a backlog of work leftover from last fall and spring, and contracting will be an extended process. A Task Force member asked about the sub-service draining system and the overuse of tiling, and Gipp answered that those issues would be addressed in the long term. Gipp said that he thought the explanation of tiling causing flooding was overemphasized. A Task Force member said that he was pleased with the mention of watershed and drainage planning. Another Task Force said that watershed projects will be an additional challenge in terms of resources and urban management of water flow as well. A Task Force member said that the USDA should be credited with the progress made so far. Another Task Force member said that improvements have leveled off, and shifts in land use to pastures and CRP land have helped reduce flooding. She mentioned that significant changes in farming practices should be acknowledged.

Halling introduced Gerald Miller from Iowa State University. Miller said that Iowa soil resources are in trouble and rebuilding soil organic matter will be important. He said that there has been a decrease of organic material in the topsoil, and that is problematic. Ideal conditions would include organic material to act as porous material to drain water. Poor soil quality has reduced soil organic matter and reduced pore space because of tilling practices. Miller said that the challenge is to stabilize the topsoil loss, rebuild soil organic matter, and reduce soil bulk density. Miller said that potential options include authorities concerning county soil loss limits, conservation compliance, and residue management definitions. For short term recommendations, Miller suggested considering incentives for conservation practice, targeting funds for land having the highest return for reduction of potential erosion, completing the Residue Inventory Survey, completing and implementing LIDAR, and implementing cover crops and/or soil tests for the 1 million acres in fallow this year. Long term recommendations include the support of performance based watershed initiatives, technical assistance through educational activities focused on HUC 12 or smaller watersheds, assessment of cost effective practices, the role of bioenergy crops, diversity of cropping systems, and research to develop innovative conservation practices.

A Task Force member asked about drainage systems and whether there were additional things to be done about buffers and filter strips. Miller said that Iowa State University faculty members are working on Iowa's drainage system, since most of it was put in 100 years ago and is antiquated. The system does not allow soils to achieve their production potential. There is also work being done to explore opportunities to capture excess water and use it for irrigation later. There is also work being done to look at buffers, but there are opportunities to be doing the recommended practices. A Task Force member said that reengineering of the tile drainage district system should also address water quality issues, in addition to moving water. A Task Force member asked if soil bulk density could be addressed through products, and Miller said the issue becomes the cost required to apply that product. A Task Force member asked how farmers sustain corn on corn planting for multiple years, and Miller said manure spreading on crops can aid that. A Task Force member asked for a breakdown of the ability of different types of soil to hold water. Miller said that most are medium density soils and are ideal for growing plants. Halling thanked Miller for presenting.

### *Levee Update and Issues*

Dan Rasmussen introduced himself and Bruce Barnhart and said there are enough contractors to do the work, but the timetable to be met is concentrated. Another issue has been the weather, which prevents work from being done. He recommended that in order to attract more contractors, projects should pay increased rates and contractors need to be able to work on CRP land earlier in the year. Most contractors have the knowledge to rebuild terraces and waterways. With regard to assistance and design, areas can vary due to different levels of experience or preference. He recommended increasing the length of the construction period for contractors and technicians. He said that he toured Delaware County, and when conservation practices are in place, soil erosion can be controlled.

A Task Force member asked if the EQUIP program to offer incentives for conservation would be positive, and Rasmussen said that the nature of the effect would depend on the amount for incentives and whether the incentive was enough to set aside acres. A Task Force member asked about using LIDAR to do layout, and since offices do not recommend contractors, she suggested implementing a certification system for contractors. Rasmussen said the idea sounded good, but the practicality of the issue may provide hurdles to overcome. Barnhart said that certification has worked in Indiana and said that there should be a way to rank expertise. A Task Force member asked about comparisons to 1993; Rasmussen said that the county looks similar to 1993. He said that he will not know the scope of damages for awhile and emphasized the importance of a combination of conservation practices. A Task Force member confirmed that his experience with terraces on CRP land was similar. Halling asked about levees, and Barnhart said that levees are necessary but higher levees move the problem downstream. He recommended that levees be used to control the rain drop locally and wetland controls be used to mitigate waterways. A Task Force member said some levees were topped, and there is discussion about raising levees because the river bottom has risen. Barnhart confirmed that raising levees is necessary in some circumstances. Rasmussen said that the rising river bottom level emphasizes the need for soil conservation practices.

(Note: Paul Dobie, Army Corps of Engineers, was scheduled as a presenter. He did not attend for the scheduled presentation.)

Slater said that Paul Dobie will be tracked down to present to the second Task Force meeting. A Task Force member said that the issue is very complicated and quantifying soil movement and incentives are serious considerations. Another Task Force member said it would be important to build on best practices already established. Slater said the expectation is that there will be an opportunity to continue this work. A Task Force member said that she believes Iowa is resilient, and the information was helpful for the discussion. Another Task Force member said that he hopes the information will improve conditions for the future and put best practices into place. One Task Force member said that stakeholders and experts will make the necessary resources available and do the things that need to be done to ensure that the land is taken care of. Robinson said she was reminded of the work done to date to develop an understanding to move forward and the relationships that make it possible to have strong agreement between groups. A Task Force member said he hoped that decision makers would implement the recommended practices. Another Task Force member said that the issue is not just soil but communities and economies are also tied to disasters. He recommended avoiding a cookie cutter solution for different needs. A Resource Group member said that it is important to recognize water as an important resource in addition to soil. A Resource Group member said that individual responsibility is a large piece of conservation.

### *Insurance Coverage and Risk Issues*

Craig Rice from the Risk Management Agency talked about the Risk Management Agency that serves the states of Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. Rice talked about four issues, namely Prevented Planting, Second Crop, Final Planting Dates and Acreage Reporting. He said that companies are busy due to preventing planting plans. The program is based on the number of bushels raised and price. He said that in total there is \$200 million to \$300 million of insurance coverage. About 20 million of acres or 90 percent of acres in Iowa are insured. Rice mentioned that Iowa has high APH due to over 10 years of history. Bigger APH means that there is a bigger guarantee. There are 17 companies in Iowa that deliver the program. Iowa also enjoys good natural hedge. Disasters do cause negatives effects which affect APH but Iowa has a great delivery system with lot of insurance providers.

A Task Force member asked that people who have lost everything, do they have a choice in accepting checks now or later? Rice said that the producers need to talk to the insurance companies about that. Another Task Force member asked if producers can buy up coverage if they have bought crop insurance. Rice said that he had not heard anything about that.

Chairman Halling said he was happy to hear that Iowa enjoys good natural hedge and farmers have been taking advantage of that.

Derryl McLaren gave the opening remarks on the Farm Service Agency. His staff updated the group on the Farm Service Agency Programs. McLaren mentioned that Farm Service Agency is charged with delivering the Farm Bill of 2008.

Kevin McClure talked about Direct & Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) and Supplemental Agricultural Disaster Assistance Program. He said that the Farm Service Agency is in the process of putting together handbooks containing rules and regulations for the program. He informed that there were no changes to the DCP program from the previous Farm Bill. He said that the DCP program has two parts. The Direct part does not depend on the market, but the Counter-Cyclical part does depend on the market. Eighty-five percent of base acres are used to calculate DCP payment. There are also two limitations on the DCP program. The Direct Payment Limitation amount is \$40,000/person and Counter-Cyclical Payment Limitation amount is \$65,000/person. The deadline to enroll for 2008 DCP program is September 30, and there are no extensions. So far, 34 percent of Iowa has signed up. McClure talked about the Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE). He said that if the producer elects the ACRE program than it takes place of the Counter-Cyclical Payments on the farm and the producer receives 20 percent reduction in the Direct Payment and 30 percent reduction in the Marketing Assistance Loan Rates. He said the producer needs to meet two triggers. One is the State Trigger which requires that ACRE Guarantee exceed Actual State Revenue. The second trigger is the Farm Trigger which says that Farm ACRE Benchmark Revenue must exceed Actual Farm Revenue. Once the ACRE program is elected, farm is locked in until 2012. McClure also talked about the Supplemental Agricultural Disaster Assistance Program which includes the following program:

- Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE): This program is revenue based and not individual crop specific. There are two ways to qualify. If the county is declared Secretarial Disaster Declaration that automatically qualifies for the farm to receive this assistance or the total loss of production for the farm is greater than 50% or more. Buy-in fees for SURE are categorized as Crop Insurance (CAT) Insurable Crop and Non-Insurable Crop (NAP). The buy-in deadline is September 16 and the rules will not be available before the deadline. For 2009 forward, a producer needs to have insurance in place to qualify for this. This only covers regular crop. SURE payments are

based on yields. A Task Force member mentioned that it is hard to show vegetable crop yield.

- Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP): This is applicable for drought or fire.
- Tree Assistance Program (TAP).
- Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP): This is similar to the old livestock compensation program.
- Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP).

Paul Fredrickson talked about two loan programs, namely, Direct Loans and Guaranteed Loans. Direct Loan Programs allow one to borrow directly from the Federal Treasury and offers lower loan limits with lower rates and longer repayment terms. Guaranteed Loans comes from a traditional lender and have higher loan limits. There are three loan types, Operating Loans, Farm Ownership Loans, and Emergency Loans. Emergency loans require a disaster designation. Ninety-seven counties in Iowa are designated as disaster areas. Emergency loans can be borrowed for production losses or physical losses. A Task Force member asked if emergency loans can be received if there is a crop loss. Fredrickson said yes, because it is a supplemental loan.

Robin Holcomb talked about the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP). The purpose of ECP is to rehabilitate farmland and conservation structures that have been damaged by natural disasters. The maximum payment limitation for ECP is \$200,000 per person per disaster and the minimum cost share limitation is \$750 per person per fiscal year for all natural damage on all farms. Friedow said that emergency loans are approved for physical loss, but you have to be an owner of the farm and if something is under maintenance agreement, one cannot use ECP payments. A Task Force member asked what one does if the roads are washed out. Friedow answered that if it is a CRP fodder strip, they will pay to reestablish that. One speaker raised the issues that conservation on the ground, especially water quality, is also an important issue.

Vickie Friedow talked about the extension of the Crop Reporting Deadline from June 30 to August 15. She mentioned that the producers will need to abide by the state regulation. Their next process will be to compile all the county information assembled by August 6<sup>th</sup> and tally it and present it to the Board who will pass on the recommendations to the federal level of USDA. She said that all counties with Presidential declarations and contiguous counties are eligible.

### **Gaps and Issue Identification**

Slater asked the group to identify critical issues and or gaps in what is available, that need to be addressed. He noted that these issues and the gaps identified would be brought together in categories to allow for a more organized discussion of issues at the August 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. The group came up with the following issues:

- Rebuilding terraces.
- Finding funding.
- Technical assistance.
- Environment: One Task Force member mentioned that there was not much discussion on the effects on the environment. He said that he appreciated the work by Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey on agriculture conservation, but environment is the missing link from the discussions. He said that environmental issues such as chemical spill-offs, sewage treatment plans, landfills, state parks (infrastructure such as the number that are up and running), water quality, hunting and fishing and other issues. He said that all of these issues impact the number of people who come in the state, which in turn has a monetary effect on the state.



- Soil erosion: One Task Force member mentioned that there is a lack of holistic approach to address the issue of soil erosion. There should be restrictions on till and continuous till.
- Economic impact: One Task Force member mentioned that attention should be given to communities that have a spill-over affect due to flooding, such as Dubuque.
- Engineering: One Task Force member suggested that engineering should be looked at differently. He said that it is critical that levees are fixed so that people can go back and live in places impacted by flooding.
- Landscape and hydrology modifications: There is a lack of well thought-out ideas on land use.
- Resource clean up: Rivers that have debris need to be cleaned.
- Proper systemic flood control system: This needs to be looked in a broader and systemic way.
- Management style of the dam systems and reservoirs.
- Mental and social issues that go along the flooding.
- Ensuring that the health of small rural communities is maintained for critical service providers such as schools, churches, fire, rescue, and EMS.

Slater asked the group to identify critical gaps that need to be addressed. The group suggested the following gaps:

- Services provided for people that have been affected.
- Storage: One Task Force member mentioned that the state needs to make sure that there is enough storage for harvest and there is infrastructure such as workable roads to harvest, store, and ship crops.
- Information: One Task Force member mentioned the need to have more information on economic losses to the farmers, especially those that are not part of the mainstream agriculture community.
- Continuous support system: A Task Force member raised the issue of fragmented approach to providing services. She said there is a need to revisit the information support network and create a one-stop shop.
- Policy Issues: A Task Force member raised the issue that the policies of NRCS pose problems and there is a need to establish a new system.
- Infrastructure for harvesting and transportation: One Task Force member suggested that the current infrastructure is not sufficient for agricultural related transportation and importance should be directed towards rail infrastructure.
- Lack of government incentives to shift from crops to perennials.
- Investment in technology such as LIDAR which brings innovation to conservation in the state.
- Tax incentives: One Task Force mentioned that the government does not offer enough incentives to have farmers explore alternative crop options.
- Communication: There is a lack of communication, such as, between big and small farmers and rural and town/city communities.
- One has to make sure that the federal, state, and local level pieces fit together.
- Absentee landowners
- One-stop shop: People get shuffled to so many organizations that the process can get frustrating.
- Drainage issues: One Task Force member raised the issue of regulating water drainage. He suggested that regulations should be set that slows water flow going downstream.
- Clarification on payments: What does the state pay and how is it handled? What does the federal government pay and how is that handled?

- Floodplain Standards: These need to be raised.
- Streamlining regulations.
- Balancing short-term and long-term needs.
- Continuous policy review, analysis, and best practices assessments.
- Emphasis on common sense and timeliness.
- Watershed planning: Rethinking urban planning.
- Need to go back to the basics. Can't keep putting things off to the future. Put some short-term issues on the back burner so that we can focus on the long-term issues.
- Informing contractors on critical information.
- Figure out how to work on the constraints that are there now.
- Income assistance, especially as winter approaches.
- Resource infrastructure.
- Cost of feed for farmers.
- Relaxing government regulations so that people are willing to work on conservation issues.
- Collaboration between different groups.
- Small businesses are important.

### **Process for Completing 45-Day Report and Recommendations**

Slater informed the group on the process for the 45-day report and informed the group of the second Agriculture and Environment Task Force meeting scheduled for August 13 from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. at the Johnston Public Library. He noted that he would work to provide a draft of the report and ask for only those comments that are "content critical."

### **Closing Comments and Adjourn**

Chairman Halling thanked everyone for attending and contributing to the discussion. He discussed the process of the Task Force Commission. The Commission will go to other cities for its remaining meetings. Halling said that he will be giving a short report to the Commission tomorrow in Cedar Rapids. He assured Representative Kuhn that his comments about the environmental side will be taken into consideration in the final recommendations to the Commission and the Governor.

There were no additional comments. Chairman Halling adjourned the meeting.